

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Republican Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell,

At the onset of 2021 and a new presidential administration, we still find our country battling dual pandemics – COVID-19 and untreated mental and behavioral health disorders. While the pandemic has resulted in expanded access to telehealth, it has also spurred increases in substance use, overdoses, depression, and anxiety. Studies have found that worry and stress related to COVID have had a major negative impact on many Americans' mental health, particularly for those who have lost income or a job. In June, over 40% of surveyed adults reported a negative mental or behavioral health condition related to COVID, including 31% who reported anxiety or depression symptoms, 13% who started or increased their substance use, and 11% who seriously considered suicide over the past month. It is critical that we address this troubling trend.

We are grateful for the funding that has already been provided to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in previous COVID-response packages, including \$4.25 billion in the December 2020 bipartisan omnibus package, but more assistance is needed. We respectfully request that the next COVID response bill include \$10 billion in funding for SAMHSA, dedicated to the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant and Community Mental Health Services Block Grant programs.

Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program

We request that \$5 billion be designated for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG) program. The CDC reported over 81,000 drug overdose deaths in the United States between July 2019 and June 2020. This is the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a 12-month period. While Congress has made great strides in addressing the COVID-19 response, we cannot ignore the worsening addiction crisis. SABG provides funding to states and territories to plan, implement, and assess activities that both prevent and treat substance use disorder. This funding is necessary to increase prevention efforts and ensure that individuals with substance use disorders can

receive life-saving treatment, despite the additional barriers posed by COVID-19.

Community Mental Health Services Block Grant Program

We request that \$5 billion be designated for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (MHBG) program. Of the more than 30% of American adults who recently reported having symptoms consistent with an anxiety and/or depressive disorder, over 20% reported needing, but not receiving, mental health counseling or therapy. Based on increases in depressive disorder and unmet mental health needs, as well as data collected during the 2003 SARS epidemic pointing to the likelihood of increased suicides in a number of demographic groups, many researchers remain concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic will result in an increase in suicides. MHBG provides comprehensive, community-based mental health services to adults and children and supports implementation of a comprehensive, community-based mental health system. Given the surge of new mental health needs due to COVID-19, it is imperative that we provide robust funding to expand access to effective mental health treatments.

As COVID-19 continues into the new year, we must not lose sight of the addiction and mental health crisis we faced before the onset of the pandemic, and which has only been exacerbated by it. These behavioral and mental health services are crucial to save lives and improve Americans' well-being. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



David Trone
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

/s/

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

/s/

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

/s/

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

/s/

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

/s/

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

/s/

André Carson
Member of Congress

/s/

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

/s/

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

/s/

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

/s/

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

/s/

Jared Golden
Member of Congress

/s/

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

/s/

Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

/s/

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

/s/

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

/s/

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

/s/

Michael F.Q. San Nicolas
Member of Congress

/s/

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

/s/

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

/s/

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

/s/

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

/s/

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

/s/

Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

/s/

Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

/s/

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

/s/

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

/s/

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

/s/

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

/s/

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

/s/

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

/s/

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

/s/

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

/s/

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

/s/

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

/s/

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

/s/

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

/s/

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

/s/

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

/s/

Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

/s/

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

/s/

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

/s/

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

/s/

Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

/s/

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

/s/

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/

Frank J. Mrvan
Member of Congress

/s/

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

/s/

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

/s/

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

/s/

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

/s/

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

/s/

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

/s/

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

/s/

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

/s/

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

/s/

Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

/s/

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

/s/

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

/s/

Susie Lee
Member of Congress

/s/

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

/s/

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

/s/

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

/s/

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

/s/

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

/s/

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

/s/

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

/s/

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

/s/

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

/s/

Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress

/s/

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress